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A CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY
OF ADDITIONAL BORROW, POINT PLEASANT, MISSOURI
RIVERSIDE BERM ITEM NO. R-878,
NEW MADRID COUNTY

DTIC QUALITY

U. S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
Memphis District

Carroll H. Kleinhans
Archeologist

April 1980

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ABSTRACT

On 19 December 1979, an intensive cultural resources survey was conducted by the Environmental Resources Section of the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, Memphis District over a 3.44 acre borrow area associated with the Point Pleasant, Missouri Riverside Berm, Item R-878. This item includes four borrow tracts from which fill will be removed. Three of the borrow areas were intensively surveyed in May, 1979 by staff members of the Center for Archaeological Research at Southwest Missouri State University. Two prehistoric sites (23NM287, 23NM288) and three historic deposits (23NM286, 23NM289, 23NM290) were located. The project right of way was modified to avoid four of the five sites. To compensate for the loss of borrow acreage the additional 3.44 acres of borrow were acquired and surveyed. The tract is located in the SE $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Township 21N, Range 14E, Section 33, New Madrid County, Missouri. A literature search and a pedestrian survey failed to locate any archeological, historic or architectural sites within the project right of way of the fourth borrow tract.

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INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of a cultural resources survey conducted within a 3.44 acre borrow area associated with the Point Pleasant Riverside Berm, Item R-878 in New Madrid County, Missouri. The total project includes four borrow tracts from which fill will be removed. In May 1979, staff members from the Center for Archaeological Research, Southwest Missouri State University conducted an intensive survey over three of these tracts. Two prehistoric sites (23NM287, 23NM288) and three historic surface scatters (23NM286, 23NM289, 23NM290) were located and reported (Price and Harris 1979) under the auspices of Contract No. DACW66-79-M-1164, funded by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, Memphis District. The project right of way was modified to avoid four of the five sites. The resulting loss of borrow acreage necessitated acquisition and survey of a fourth small borrow area located in the SE $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 33 in Township 21N, Range 14E. The pedestrian survey of this fourth borrow area was conducted on 19 December 1979 by the Environmental Resources Section of the Memphis District Corps of Engineers in accordance with requirements outlined in the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (P.L. 89-665) and recommended by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (P.L. 91-190) and Executive Order 11593 Protection and Enhancement of the Cultural Environment, 13 May 1971 (36 C.F.R. 9821). The survey consisted of visual inspection of the ground surface within the right of way boundaries. Shovel testing was unnecessary because of excellent ground surface conditions. Surface visibility was subjectively estimated as 80 per cent. An extensive background literature search for information pertinent to the prehistoric and historic occupations of New Madrid County was prepared by Price and Harris (1979: 14-23) and relied upon in this addition to the Point Pleasant project. A separate records check was conducted using Archaeological Survey of Missouri site files, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers maps and other available data. No cultural resources were located within this section of the Point Pleasant right of way.

STUDY AREA AND PROJECT DESCRIPTION

At the request of the St. Francis Levee District the Corps of Engineers will undertake levee repair work and riverside berm construction at multiple sites along the Point Pleasant section of the main Mississippi River Levee. The project is located in the extreme southeast corner of New Madrid County, Missouri, approximately 8.8 miles east of the center of Portageville. The work locations occur between Levee Mile 1 near Point Pleasant and Levee Mile 5, just south of the village of Linda. Slides are eroded or slumping sections along the levee embankment which must be patched with additional earth. Berms are fills placed either landside or riverside of levees to increase the seepage path so as to reduce or eliminate the danger, during highwater, of failure of the levee due to underseepage. The repair section is dressed, fertilized and sodded. Fill for this work will be taken from four borrow areas for which right of way has been negotiated by the St. Francis Levee District.

The subject of this report is a 3.44 acre borrow tract at the southern end of the project area between stations 4/2+00 and 4/10+00 (Fig. 1). It is located along the edge of a soybean field bordered on the west and north by levees and on the south by an unlettered county road which connects Linda with a grain facility and ferry crossing on the right bank of the Mississippi River. Approximately 2.06 acres of this tract is an existing borrow pit immediately adjacent to the east berm of the levee. The pit was filled with water at the time of the survey and edged by trees estimated as approximately 50 years old (Mr. Andrew White, Botanist, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, personal communication). The impact zone is a narrow 1.38 acre rectangle which slopes gradually from an elevation of 285 ft. above NGVD at the eastern border to approximately 279 ft. above NGVD at the edge of the existing borrow pit (Fig. 2). This slope appears to have been the product of previous borrow operations. The proposed project will further cut into the slope as much as 200 ft. east of the borrow pit edge, down to an elevation of 276 ft. above NGVD.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The project area falls within the Mississippi alluvial lowland of southeast Missouri which is the Mississippi Embayment Extension of the Gulf Coastal Plain physiographic province (Steiermark 1963:xvi). The topography is flat to undulating, punctuated by low ridges or natural levees rising a few feet above the alluvial terrace. Prior to the late 19th century, this terrace was drained by sluggish bayous, dotted with shallow lakes, and covered by a vast hardwood forest. Low elevations supported bald cypress, water tupelo and ash. Higher elevations were covered with elm, red maple, sweet gum, overcup oak, willow oak, pin oak, and hickories. Associated fauna included the bald eagle, golden eagle, passenger pigeon, ivory-billed woodpecker, Bachman's warbler, red shouldered hawk, wood duck, swamp rabbit, mountain lion and black bear (Korte and Fredrickson 1977: 31).

Geologically, the project area falls within the youngest occupation of the Mississippi River meander belt (Saucier 1974: Fig. 1). Above Memphis, the river lies in approximately the same location as the preceding No. 3 and No. 4 meander belts. The present meander belt may, therefore, include landforms which range in age from 0 to 6000 years before present (Saucier (1974: 11). As the river abandons a channel, filling begins. Saucier (1974: 10) estimates that alluvial clay and silt deposits may have attained a depth of 100 ft. or more in some locations. One such backswamp deposit is located just west of the borrow tract discussed in this report (U.S.D.A. 1977: Fig. 17, General Soil Map). Until the early twentieth century when drainage alteration projects began, the Point Pleasant area was drained to the north by Portage Bayou and to the south by Portage Open Bay.

The soils at the southern end of the project area are indicative of the flood-plain location. Commerce-Caruthersville association soils cover a 1 to 3 mile wide swath west of the Mississippi River. Included in this classification are

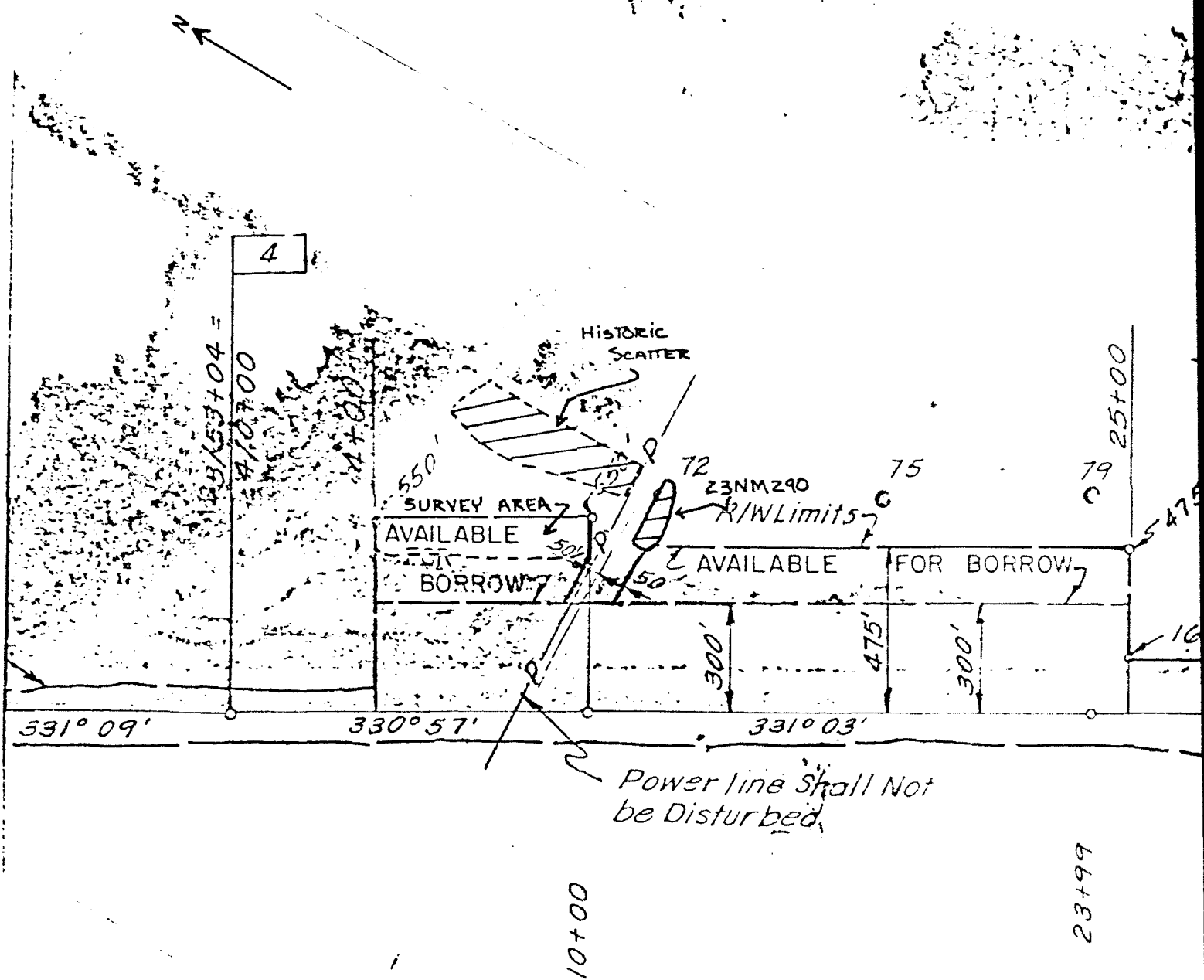
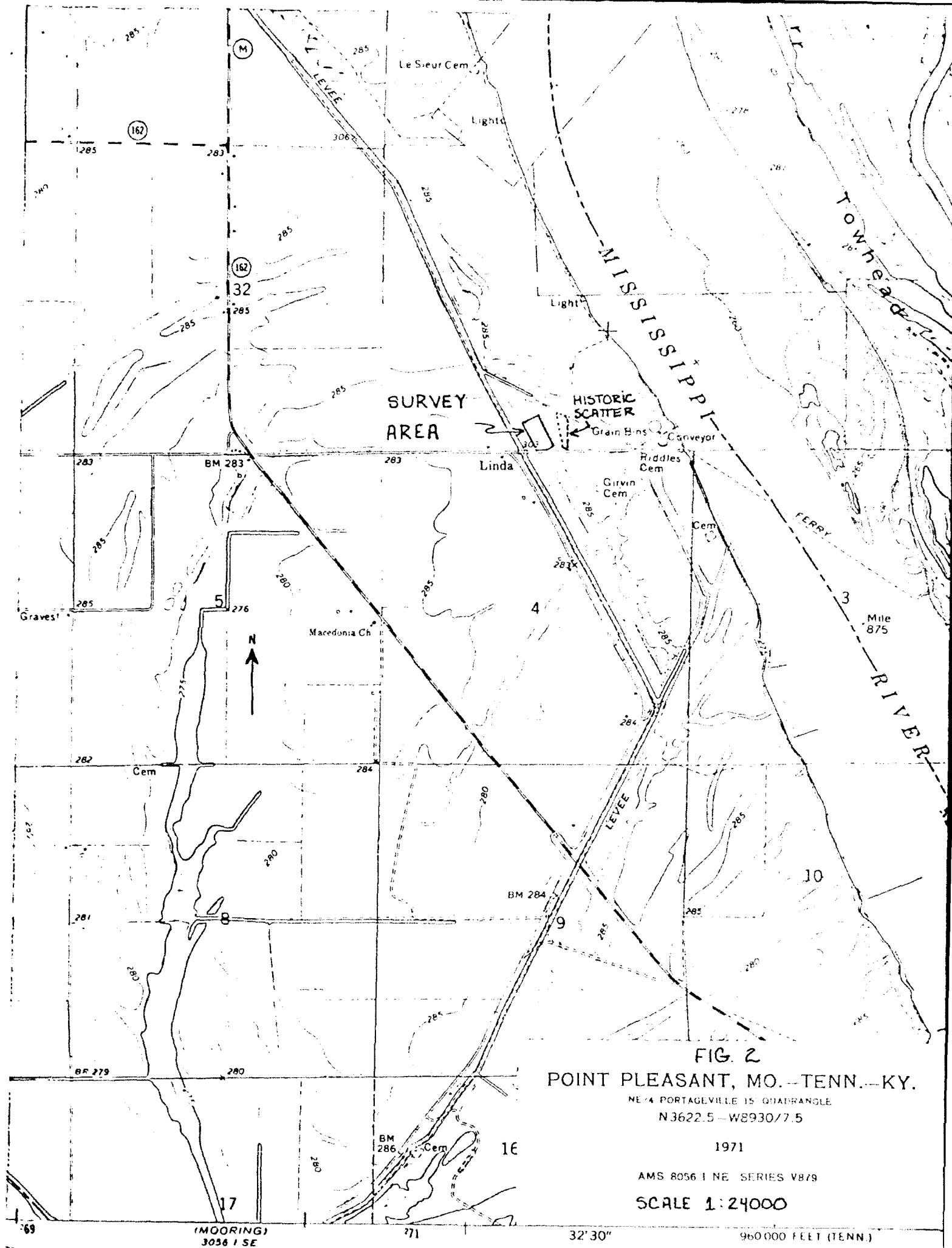


FIG. 1
SURVEY AREA

SCALE 1:5000



recently deposited, loamy alluvial soils which are level and only poorly to moderately well drained. The floodplain is inundated yearly in late winter, spring and summer. Runoff after flooding is slow. Although the native vegetation is mixed hardwoods, the project area is cleared and cultivated yearly in soybeans (U.S.D.A. 1977: 7,8,18).

The climate of the southern Missouri lowlands is mid-continental. This section of the state receives the heaviest rainfall, annually averaging 46 inches. The average annual temperature is 60°F. The first freeze occurs between 25 October and 24 November, and freezing conditions may continue to 26 March or as late as 10 April. This gives an average of approximately 220 frost-free days every year (U.S.D.A. 1971: 43).

RESULTS OF THE RECORDS SEARCH

Price and Harris (1979: 14-28) present a thorough review of what is known of New Madrid County's culture history with reference to the Little River Lowland and the Point Pleasant Levee. Their summary was relied upon extensively in the production of this report. To augment their overview, available Mississippi River charts dating back to 1879, were also studied.

A comparison of 1 minute quadrates from each of the 1879-1880 and 1911-1915 Corps of Engineers hydrology charts was made with the same quadrate on the 1971 Point Pleasant, Missouri-Tennessee-Kentucky U.S.G.S. 7.5 minute quadrangle. The River has moved steadily west in the last 100 years. The east-west road to the ferry crossing appears to have existed in approximately the same location since the late 19th century. The degree of accuracy of the placement of road and house locations on the hydrology maps is unknown. Transposing scales from the hydrology charts to the quadrangle map indicates that one house located on the south side of the road in 1879 (Chart No. 9) may have been destroyed by levee construction. It would have been located west of the borrow tract. The 1911-1915 chart (No. 7) illustrates a house on the north side of the road which may have been located in the western portion of the borrow tract reported here. The house does not appear on either the 1955 Portageville Missouri-Tennessee-Kentucky 15 minute U.S.G.S. quadrangle or the 1971 Point Pleasant 7.5 minute quadrangle. Mr. George Glozier, Chief Engineer of the St. Francis Levee District, was interviewed regarding the borrow tract. He stated that the property originally belonged to the Girvin family. After the death of the last heir, the Rone family acquired the property and then sold the portion adjacent to the levee for construction right of way in 1951. The location of the Girvin family cemetery is marked on the Point Pleasant quadrangle, southeast of the project impact zone.

A records search of site files was requested of the Archaeological Survey of Missouri specific to Township 21N, Range 14E, Section 33. By letter dated 9 November 1979, Mr. David R. Evans responded that one site, 23NM27, was known within Section 33 (see Appendix A). This site is located approximately 0.4 miles east of the surveyed borrow tract.

No sites within the project boundaries are currently listed on or are being considered for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places as of 11 March 1980 and 18 March 1980 (see Appendix B). Neither are there any sites within the project boundaries listed in the Missouri Historic Sites Catalog (Caldwell 1963: 113) (see Appendix C) or by the Historic American Building Survey (1941, 1959).

SURVEY METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

The designated borrow tract is approximately 3.44 acres in size. A water-filled borrow pit accounts for 2.06 acres of the total tract. Survey over the remaining 1.38 acres included visual inspection of the surface along 4 transects spaced 10 m apart. Shovel testing has been planned but was unnecessary because of excellent surface visibility. The field was last cultivated in soybeans. Harvesting removed all leaf and pod debris and nearly all stubble. Surface visibility was subjectively estimated as 80 per cent.

Study of the 1971 Point Pleasant 7.5 minute quadrangle indicates that the right of way is limited to land previously altered by construction related to levee building or repair. The western portion of the soybean field appears to have been graded gradually down to the elevation of the top bank of the excavated pit. An east-west gulley is actively cutting into the resultant slope. A tractor or farm equipment track circles the base of the slope from the ferry road around to the northeast corner of the field. The ground between this track and the edge of the borrow pit was partially covered by standing water at the time of the survey.

Survey located 2 brick fragments; 1 fragment of a Miller beer can; a sliver each of untinted brown and blue glass; and one small snake skull. All were found in the low area west of the farm track. These artifacts are stored with the Environmental Resources Section of the Memphis District Corps of Engineers.

The brick fragments and possibly the glass slivers are the only remaining evidences that a structure may have been located in the vicinity. If a house once occupied this spot, however, it and its foundations were destroyed by previous levee construction or repair activities. An abundance of brick fragments in association with a few pieces of whiteware, lavender glass and metal fragments were observed spread across the east end of the soybean field, outside the right of way. These artifacts were observed but not collected. This scatter was not tested because it is located entirely outside the project impact zone. The visually observed boundaries of the scatter are mapped on Figs. 1 and 2. Until tested, it is difficult to assess whether the debris is the remains of the house appearing on the 1911-1915 hydrology chart, the remains of a more recent structure, or a secondary deposit, as suggested by Price and Harris (1979: 45) of site 23NM290, located directly across the ferry access road to the south.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on an in-field cultural resource survey and a background records search, no evidence of significant archeological, historic, or architectural resources exists within the direct impact zone of the proposed Point Pleasant levee work. It is recommended that borrowing and associated construction within the right of way be cleared to proceed as planned.

The survey methodology used does not eliminate the possibility of encountering deeply buried sites. Therefore, it is recommended that any site encountered during construction be protected from further damage until its significance can be determined by the Environmental Resources Section, Memphis District Corps of Engineers in conjunction with the Missouri Office of Historic Preservation.

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APPENDIX A

Correspondence



UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI-COLUMBIA

College of Arts and Science

Archaeological Survey

Room 15 Switzler Hall
Columbia, Missouri 65201
Telephone (314) 882-8354

November 9, 1979

Carroll Kleinhans, Archaeologist
Environmental Resources Section
Dept. of the Army
Memphis District, Corps of Engineers
668 Clifford Davis Federal Building
Memphis, Tennessee 38103

Dear Ms. Kleinhans:

Attached is information related to your recent request for us to search the Archaeological Survey of Missouri records to determine if there are any located and recorded resources in the area you are examining. Our search has indicated that there are known cultural resources which are outlined on the attached page. As you are aware, further information on these sites may be examined at the Archaeological Survey office on the noted resources.

It is obvious that other, unlocated resources may be present since there is no evidence that the available information is complete or exhaustive of what may be available with an in-the-field search.

Please consider that the site locations are sensitive and you should take precautions to protect the integrity of the locations to help avoid unnecessary site destruction and vandalism. Any further information which you may obtain on the nature of the site(s) will be most welcome additions to the archaeological data bank stored here,

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David R. Evans".

David R. Evans
Manager

Area searched: Please see the enclosed.

RECORDED SITES

Cape Girardeau County:
23CG36

S.26 T.30N R.13E

New Madrid County:
23NM27

S.53 T.21N R.14E

Appendix B

National Register of Historic Places

New Madrid County, Missouri:

Catron vicinity. Hurricane Ridge Site.

LaForge vicinity. LaPlant Archeological Site.

Lilbourn vicinity. Lilbourn Fortified Village, Archeological Site (Mound Cemetery).

Portageville vicinity. Double Bridges Archeological Site.

Sikeston vicinity. Sikeston Fortified Village Archeological Site.

Appendix C

Missouri Historic Sites Catalogue

New Madrid County, Missouri:

New Madrid. William W. Hunter - William Dawson Home (1858). Dawson Road.

New Madrid Area. Robert A. Hatcher Home, "Oakland" (cu. 1845). 2.5 miles north of New Madrid.

El Camino Real Marker. 1 mile north of New Madrid on U. S. Highway 61.